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Change the CIA, Too

THE CENTRAL Intelligence Agency yesterday got a new boss who does not quite fit the picture of a master spy.

John A. McCone is a wealthy shipbuilder and shipping operator who served two high-level stints in Washington, as Undersecretary of the Air Force in the Truman Administration and as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission during the last three years of the Eisenhower Administration. He has had no direct service in intelligence work. Presumably, he has impressed someone in Washington with his abilities of analysis and administration, which may be more important in his job than experience in espionage.

McCone replaces (in November, officially) a man who had more apparent qualifications as CIA director. Allen W. Dulles had served in the diplomatic service and, during World War II, in the Office of Strategic Services, the American overseas espionage agency.

ALTHOUGH BOTH Dulles and the CIA have been widely criticized from time to time—most violently after the Cuban invasion fiasco—history may be kinder than the contemporary critics. Under Dulles, the CIA is generally credited with having engineered the overthrow of the pro-Communist Arbenz government in Guatemala and the Communist-backed Mossadegh regime in Iran. Its U-2 spying over Russia ended disastrously when Francis Powers' plane was shot down on the eve of the Eisenhower-Khrushchev meeting, but the CIA by this method had been collecting valuable information on Soviet military installations for four years. The Cuban invasion was terribly bungled but the CIA cannot be held entirely accountable. Most objective studies indicate the invasion might have achieved at least partial success if the

planned air support had not been canceled at the last minute by the White House.

Whatever the efficiency record of the CIA during eight years of Dulles' direction, there are two obvious weaknesses in its system of operation.

AN AGENCY charged with gathering intelligence should not also have responsibility for executing policy based on that intelligence. This was one of the reasons for the Cuban disaster. The CIA became too much a partisan of the invasion project to take a coldly critical view of all the possibilities; moreover, it was poorly equipped to plan a military expedition of this size. Hereafter, the CIA ought to be confined to getting information on the enemy; the job of arranging subversion and palace revolutions should be left to others with a more detached viewpoint.

The second weakness in the CIA setup is the lack of any real check on its activities. It has grown into an immense spiderweb, employing some 15,000 people and spending an estimated \$1,000,000,000 a year. But only a few in the executive department know how much it actually spends or for what purposes. There should be, as has been proposed many times without success, a joint committee of Congress to oversee the CIA. Secrecy, of course, is imperative; but a joint committee manages to keep watch on the atomic energy program without giving away secrets. The CIA is too big, too costly and too important to the national security to be removed entirely from the legislative process.

Mr. McCone may be a man of unsuspected qualifications as a spymaster and we hope so. But unless the present system is changed, a change in bosses will not result in a more effective CIA.